

one of the fallen sons of the 18th Congressional District in Houston, Texas, whose funeral today was commemorated and celebrated by his family and friends and by the city and by those who loved him.

Tomas Sotelo, Jr., Army corporal, lost his life in Iraq on June 27, 2003, fighting for the values and virtues of this Nation. This young man, barely 21 years old, lost his life in battle. Today was his funeral at his beloved Reagan High School, and I had the honor of saluting him at that service.

But more than that, I think it is appropriate to come today to raise up this young man for he was well admired and respected. In getting to know his family during this very troubling and trying time, I can say they love this country; and this family gave the ultimate sacrifice, their loving baby son.

Corporal Sotelo is immediately survived by Mr. and Mrs. Tomas Sotelo, Sr.; his brother, Jose; and his sisters, First Lieutenant Flor Lopez and Erica. Sitting in their living room, I got to know the family and heard them talk about the love and friendship and fellowship that this family engaged in. I heard the mother tell me that she had spoken to her son just 3 days before his death, that he always told them that he missed them and he loved them. He was never far from their hearts and minds.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we be reminded as we stand in this body that we have an obligation to those young men and women who now are in Baghdad. We have an obligation to them to be reminded of their willingness without question to give the ultimate sacrifice, and we owe them not only the tribute and salute on the day of their death and funeral, we owe them a tribute as we conduct ourselves in determining the future that holds for this country and for Iraq.

I am told by Tomas' friends that he was a person of great humor, always lively and always engaging in some activity to make people smile or laugh. He loved Reagan High School, and graduated in the year 2000. He was a member of the ROTC. Let me say how proud I was to be able to have worked with the family to hold his funeral ceremonies at Reagan High School. I thank the Houston Independent School District for their courtesies in making every arrangement for that to be possible today.

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Let me acknowledge his grandparents, who traveled more than 24 hours by bus from Mexico to be with his family. And let me acknowledge the fact that though this family may not have had its original origins in this Nation, they stand equal to any of us by having given the ultimate sacrifice, the loss of their young and their most beloved son.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is with great humbleness, great sorrow that I ex-

press on behalf of the United States Congress our deepest sympathy, for on this day there are conflicting emotions, the emotions of having lost its fallen son and hero, a recipient of the Purple Heart and Bronze Medal for his heroic achievements, and, of course, the ultimate sacrifice. And yet I stand here representing the fact that this young man, this Army corporal, Tomas Sotelo, Jr., was a hero of the 18th Congressional District of the State of Texas and, yes, the Nation. And might I say as he was a member of the Howitzer Battery, Squadron 2, Armored Cavalry Regiment from Fort Polk, Louisiana, that as he lays with the angels, we will not forget him, and we will simply thank him and bid farewell to this young man, dying in the prime of his life, being reminded that we will never forget him and that we will continue to thank his family for the ultimate sacrifice that they made.

Might I say, Mr. Speaker, in closing that he remains a true American hero, and we will tell his story over and over again so the young people of his high school will know that a hero walked this way.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Army Corporal Tomas Sotelo, Jr., a hero to the people of the 18th Congressional District of Texas and to the people of the United States of America.

Corporal Sotelo died last week while valiantly serving his country in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Corporal Sotelo served his country as a member of the Howitzer Battery, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, from Fort Polk, LA. Corporal Sotelo is also a cherished resident of Houston, TX.

Since his days as a youth in Houston, Corporal Sotelo has been dedicated to serving Americans as a member of our uniformed services. He was a member of the Reserve Officers Training Corps at Reagan High School in Houston, TX, where he received his high school degree. Dedicated service runs deep in the Sotelo family. Corporal Sotelo's sister is a First Lieutenant in the Armed Services as well.

As with every brave member of our military who has died in service to our country, the United States of America owes Corporal Sotelo an immeasurable debt of gratitude. His willingness to put himself at risk to create a world of peace will never be forgotten. He made the ultimate sacrifice by giving his life in service to our Nation during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and he has contributed immeasurably to the freedom and security of both Iraq and the world.

Corporal Sotelo epitomizes the best of the United States of America—bravery, selfless service, dedication, and honor. Corporal Sotelo possessed all of these attributes, and many more, in abundance. Corporal Sotelo's life and sacrifice should be celebrated by all Americans, and his contribution to this country should be remembered always. He will truly be missed.

To the family of Corporal Sotelo, I extend my deepest condolences and sorrow at the loss of their loved one. The memory of his bright life will remain an inspiration to all of us.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I ask every Member of Congress, and every American to join me in

paying tribute to the life and courage of Army Corporal Tomas Sotelo, Jr.—a true American hero.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KOLBE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GUTKNECHT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### SOCIAL SECURITY'S COMING CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about Social Security's coming crisis. The actuaries and trustees of the Social Security Administration have long understood, at least for the last 15 years, the challenges facing our Social Security program. With the impending retirement of the large baby-boom generation starting around 2012, there will be a shift in the proportion of workers paying into Social Security compared to those retirees drawing benefits. As a result, there will not be enough money as benefits going out will exceed taxes coming in by about 2015.

Recently I met with White House staff and political director Karl Rove to encourage Presidential leadership and Republicans and Democrats in Congress to deal with the coming crisis. It is easy to put off. There is even a greater need to face up to the Social Security problem now with the probability of more money being spent for a very expensive prescription drug benefit that probably is going to be added to Medicare.

Let me talk about what is happening to the population 65 years old and older. It is going to increase from currently 37 million today to 75 million in 2035 and to 95 million by 2075, so a huge increase in the number of retirees while the birth rate is going down, so fewer workers to pay their in taxes to cover those benefits. This population will grow much faster than the workers due to increased life expectancy for seniors and lower birth rates. Because Social Security is a pay-as-you-go system, with workers' payroll taxes going immediately to pay benefits to seniors, these demographic changes are going to lead to the program's insolvency in a little over 10 years unless something is done.

The options for Social Security are straightforward, I think. We can increase payroll taxes, which are already